

January 28, 2004

The Honorable Carl R. Johnson, Chair
Senate Environment Committee
Room 104
Legislative Office Building
Concord, NH 03301

Re: SB 481-FN, establishing the Great Bay sewer district.

Dear Senator Johnson:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB 481-FN, which establishes the Great Bay sewer district for the purpose of developing a regional sewage treatment plant and outfall delivery system. The stated purpose of the Great Bay sewer district is to acquire, own, and operate or cause to be operated a tertiary treatment plant for the treatment of wastewater from participating municipalities, the interceptor sewers necessary for the delivery of the secondary treated wastewater to the tertiary treatment facility, and the outfall delivery system for transporting the tertiary treated wastewater to either the Piscataqua River or the Atlantic Ocean. Should a recently initiated study find this project feasible and cost effective, the Department of Environmental Services (DES) would support the establishment of the proposed sewer district.

As you know, Senate Bill 70, enacted last year, established a commission to evaluate the feasibility and potential cost effectiveness of a major treated-sewage interceptor system and ocean outfall to address the wastewater disposal needs of the Great Bay/Piscataqua River watershed. The commission met throughout the summer and developed a Request For Proposal (RFP) to perform a feasibility study that was sent to 15 engineering firms. The committee recently received 3 proposals and is in the process of evaluating them. It is anticipated that the interview and selection process will be completed by the end of February. This study is expected to show whether there is sufficient municipal interest in forming a district and whether or not the project is feasible both financially and environmentally.

There are a number of technical issues DES has with the proposed bill and we are aware that substantial amendments to the bill may be presented to the committee. Accordingly, I offer my staff to assist the committee in developing a bill that would be acceptable to all interested parties.

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Thank you again for this opportunity to comment. Please call either me at 271-3503 or John Bush at 271-2001 if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely yours,

Michael P. Nolin
Commissioner

cc: Senator Green
Senator Prescott
Representative Wall
Representative Roessner